

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 44-61 are pending in the present application. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 3, 8, 46, 47 and 48 have been amended and claims 7 and 17-43 and 53 have been canceled herein, without prejudice or disclaimer of Applicants' right to refile the cancelled claims in a continuing application. The Office Action and cited references have been considered. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 3, 7-8, 11-13 and 46-61 were objected to due to a number of informalities. The claims have been amended to overcome these objections. Specifically, claims 3, 7 and 48 have been amended to remove the objected to language. With respect to claims 46 and 47, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in proper format and satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. However, to advance prosecution, and to comply with the Examiner's suggestion, for purely formal reasons, claims 46 and 57 have been amended to place them in independent form, specifically including the recitations of claim 1, which were previously part of those claims by virtue of their dependency therefrom. Applicants respectfully submit that none of the amendments to claims 3, 46 or 47 affect the scope, in any way, and in particular, do not narrow the scope of the claimed invention. Withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 14-16, 45-48, 50, 52, 54, 57-59 and 61 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Hiramatsu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,052). Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Hiramatsu et al. in view of Oikawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,765,930). Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Hiramatsu et al. in view of

Feulner (U.S. Patent No. 6,010,303). Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Hiramatsu in view of Kestler et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,148,225). Claims 12, 13, 55 and 56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Hiramatsu et al. in view Tse et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,239,625). Claims 44 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Hiramatsu et al. in view of Moriya et al. (U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0046064). Claims 49 and 51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Hiramatsu et al. in view of Sanderford, Jr. (US 5,311,541).

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 7, 8 and 53 were objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. To advance prosecution, and without conceding the merits of the rejections, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 48 to include the limitations of claims 7 and 53, respectively, which claims have been now canceled. Applicants specifically reserve their right to refile the cancelled claims in a continuing application. In addition, claims 17-43 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to advance prosecution of the application and specifically reserving Applicants' rights to file a continuation application directed to these claims.

In view of the above amendments, claims 1 and 48 are allowable over the prior art. The claims dependent therefrom are also believed to be allowable. Claims 46 and 47, as noted above, have also been rewritten in independent to include all limitations of claim 1. Therefore, these claims are also believed to be patentable. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-6, 8-16, 18-42, 44-

52 and 54-61 are patentable over the prior art of record whether taken alone or in combination as proposed in the Office Action.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of record. Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance and early notice to this effect is most earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any questions, he is invited to contact the undersigned at 202-628-5197.

Respectfully submitted,

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